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HAY, J.

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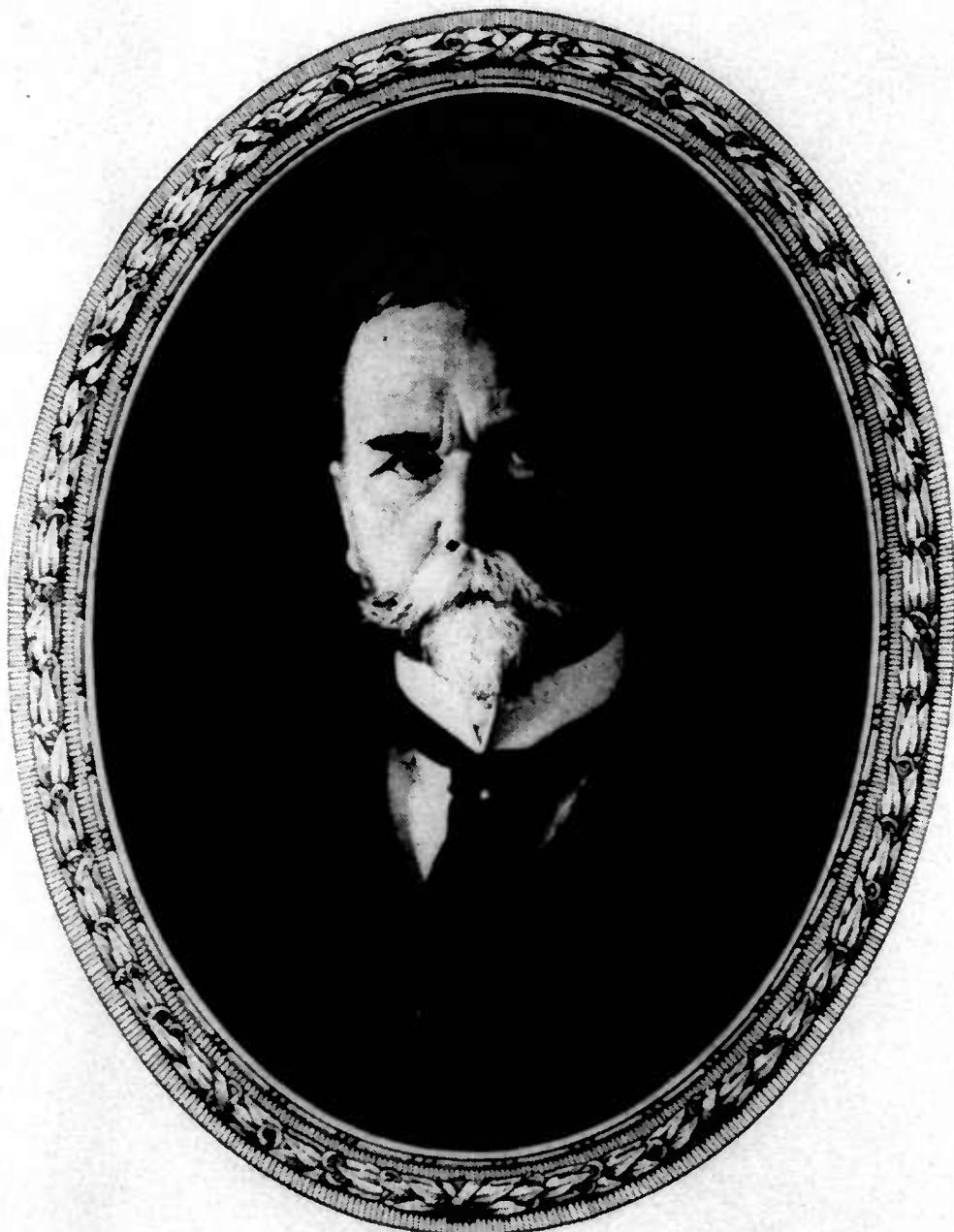
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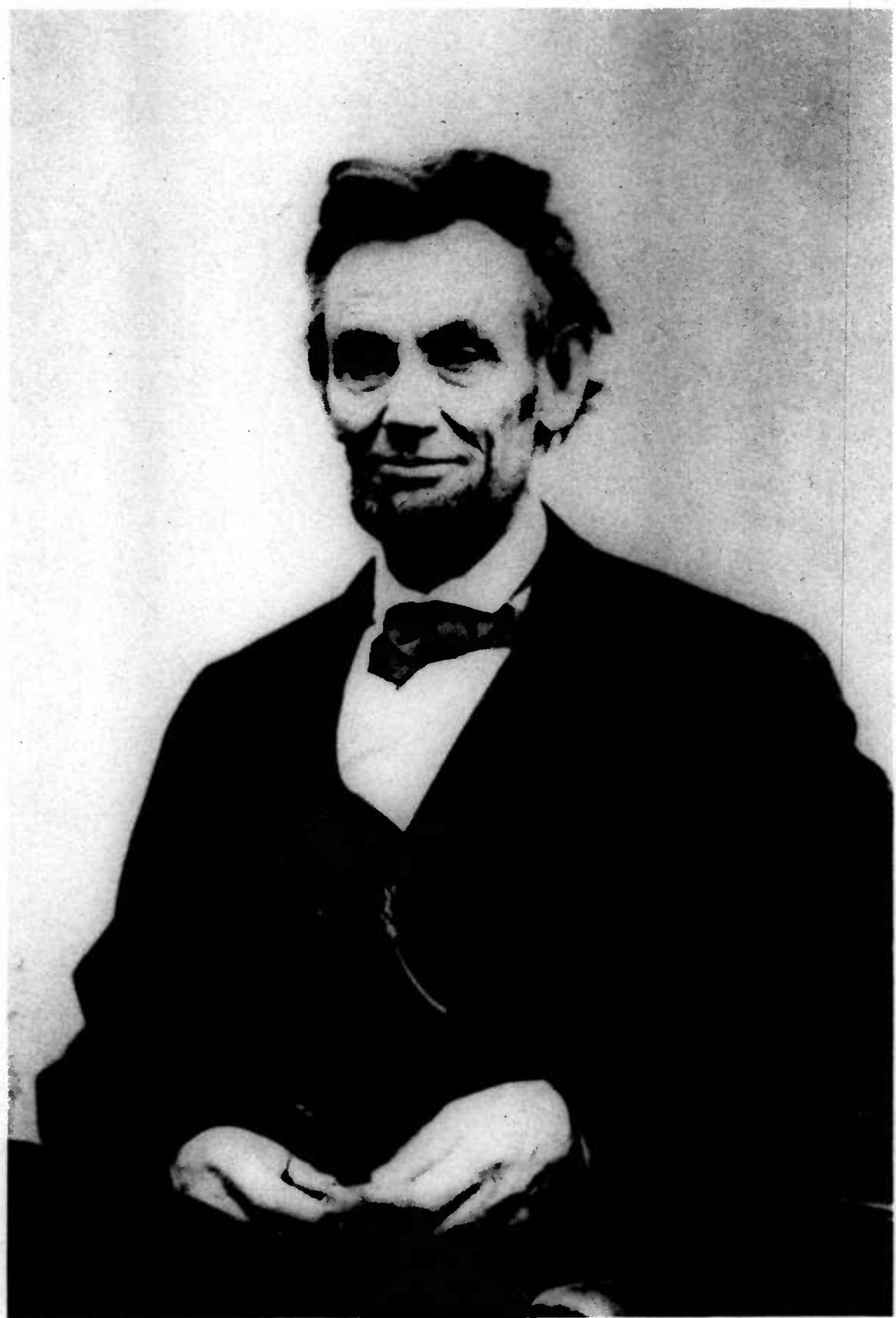
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John Hay





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General 14M153 Van Norman 16M55 H5C9CV (rect)

973.7L63
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Llegation of the United States
Paris. October 5. 1868.

My Dear Mr. Herndon

I am so
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wrote you what you desired
in your letter several months
ago. I have been chargé
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20 May 53/0000m

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General 14 M 153 V 2 in Normandy

wit official business
and my night with
social engagements
equally imperative. Even
now, I write because I
am ashamed to wait
any longer and have
a few minutes disposable.
I will answer your questions
as you put them without
any attempt at arrangement.
Lincoln used to go to

bed ordinarily from ten to eleven o'clock unless he happened to be kept up by important news, in which case he would frequently remain at the War Department until 1 or 2. He rose early. When he lived in the country at Soldiers Home, he would be up and dressed, eat his breakfast (which was extremely frugal - an egg, a piece of toast coffee &c) and ride into Washington, all before 8 o'clock. In the winter at the White House

he was not quite so early. He did not sleep very well but spent a good while in bed. Tad usually slept with him. He would lie around the office until he fell asleep Lincoln would shoulder him and take him off to bed.

He pretended to begin business at ten o'clock in the morning, but in reality the anterooms and halls were full before that

hour - people anxious to get the
first axe ground. He was
extremely unmethodical: it was
a four-years struggle on Nicolas'
part and mine to get him to
adopt some systematic rules.
He would break through every
regulation as fast as it was made.
Anything that kept the people
themselves away from him he
disapproved - although they
nearly annoyed the life out of
him by unreasonable complaints
& requests.

He wrote very few letters. He did not read one in fifty that he received. At first we tried to bring ~~them~~ this notice, but at last he gave the whole thing over to me, and signed without reading them the letters I wrote in his name. He wrote perhaps half-a-dozen a week himself - not more.

Nicolay received members of Congress, & other visitors who had business with the Executive Office, communicated ^{to} the Senate and House the

Messages of the President, & exercised
a general supervision over the business.

I opened and read the letters,
answered them, looked over the newspaper,
supervised the clerks who kept the records
and in Nicolay's absence did his work
also.

When the President had any
rather delicate matter to manage
at a distance from Washington, he
very rarely wrote, but sent Nicolay
or me.

The House remained full of
people nearly all day. At noon
the President took a little lunch -
a biscuit, a glass of milk in

winter, some fruit or grapes
in summer. He dined at
pr. 5 to 6. & we went off to
our dinner also.

Before dinner was over
members & Senators would come
back & take up the whole
evening. Sometimes, though rarely
he shut himself up & would see
no one. Sometimes he would
run away to a lecture or
concert or theatre for the
sake of a little rest.

He was very abstemious -
ate less than any one I know.
Drank nothing but water - not
from principle, but because he
did not like wine or spirits.

One in rather dark days early in the
war, a Temperance Committee came to him
& said the reason we did not win was
because our army drank so much whiskey
as to bring down the curse of the Lord upon
them. He said drily that it was rather
unfair on the part of the aforesaid Curse,
as the other side drank more and worse
whiskey than ours did.

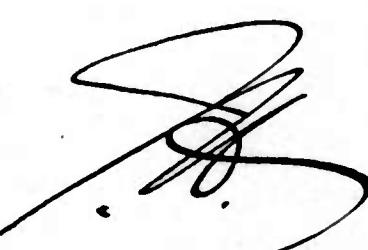
He read very little. Scarcely ever looked into a newspaper unless I called his attention to an article on some special subject. He frequently said "I know more about that than any of them." It is absurd to call him a modest man. No great man was ever modest. It was his intellectual arrogance and unconscious assumption of superiority that men like Chase and Sumner never could forgive.

I cant write any more
today. I may see you before
long — I don't know — & so
I won't waste time by telling
you what you must know
as well as I do.

I believe Lincoln is well
understood by the people. Miss
Nancy Bancroft & the rest of
that pale-faced leather kid glove set
know no more of him than
an owl does of a comet,
blazing into his blinking eyes.

Bancroft's address was a disgraceful exhibition of ignorance and prejudice. His effeminate nature shrinks instinctively from the contact of a great reality like Lincoln's character.

I consider Lincoln Republicanism incarnate - with all its faults and ^{some} all its virtues. As in spite of ^{such} rudeness, Republicanism is the sole hope of a sick world, so Lincoln with all his foibles, is the greatest character since Christ.

Yours 

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GABRIEL WELLS*